

8 MEN IN A BOAT, BY THE WOMAN



"Of course," said a freshman, soothingly, "you're only a girl; you couldn't expect to have much muscle."

I did not heed this bitter consolation, however. I was lost in admiration for the stroke oar's arms. They were magnificent, from an oarsman's point of view, swelling with muscles at every turn.

"May I touch them?" I asked awfully.

"Certainly," with a proud little smile.

The stroke oar doubled his fist and bent his elbow, the chief muscle in his arm raising my fingers five inches as he did so.

"Whew!" I exclaimed, "It must have taken some work to do that."

"Well, it has—some."

"Is it worth it?" I asked, dubiously.

"I'll tell you after the race," said the stroke oar, smiling.

"There's only one thing you'll tell after the race," said Preston, tying a hole in his sweater with a cord and drawing it tight with a sailor's knot.

"What's that?" asked the stroke oar, curiously.

"Victory!" cried several enthusiastic fellows.

"That's what!" cried Johnny Wise, turning a somersault to shake off surplus enthusiasm.

"Amens!" shouted Lee, contemporary coxswain, and following suit.

"Don't mind them," pleaded Boyle, being captain and feeling the responsibility for decorum. "If they don't get tame before the race we'll get a ducking."

"Boys!" cried the commanding voice of Coach Ward, "make haste, we're losing the best part of the day!"

"Crew, do you hear?" repeated Boyle, inside the boathouse. "Ward's getting impatient, and so's the weather. It's nearly 10 now, and by 11 we'll have a squall. Get together!"

Several "All rights" came from different parts of the float, and there was considerable scurrying to get to order.

"Joe" Stearns, who had been imitating a blanchisseuse with great effect on the back steps, muttered a scarcely audible "Hang it!" and wrung the water of the Hudson from a suit of rowing apparel. Wallace, who was fastening certain newly cleaned accessories of his toilet to the clothes line with pegs, hurriedly bunched

them in twos and threes and left them fluttering in the wind, the aching voids in heels and toes sadly suggestive of the distance between them and mother.

Then the big eight got in line beneath a beautiful cedar shell lying upside down on the rafters above them. The coxswains steadied the long points of the boats at bow and stern, and so, with lock-step, they proceeded out of the boat house to the landing.

"All ready!" shouted the captain. With a quick movement the boat was turned right side up; still resting on the shoulders of the crew.

"Lower the boat!"

The crew stooped as if they were one man. There was a flash of nickel trimmings, a soft splash on the water, followed by hundreds of ripples that seemed loath to part from the beautiful creation of polished cedar.

And the shell was launched!

It is a work of art, that shell, and no wonder the oarsmen love it. No wonder they step quietly down from the cottage to the boathouse, during the night, to see if

IF THE Varsity crew of Pennsylvania do not take home a trophy from the big race off Poughkeepsie this year it will not be for the want of energy and a determined ambition to lick every crew on the river that shows fight. I have spent a day with them in training for the big race! A day full of go and work and good fellowship.

A day in which I came closer to the real life of the college student—the right sort of college student, you understand; whose heart would risk its blood, and whose soul would almost risk its heaven for his colors—than any woman has ever done before.

I have trained with them, worked with them, joked with them, sung with them, messed with them, and, its coxswain in their shell, issued mandates which would have bred mutiny between an ordinary crew and an ordinary coxswain. But we were neither of these. I realized this as soon as I met the crew.

Last Monday was the day I spent among them.

It was a fine, bright day when I started out from Poughkeepsie and crossed the river to Highland, a picturesque village nestling on the river side of the Palisades.

A long float of brand new timber marked their camping grounds, and a long flag of red and blue, with a big blue "P," waved in the breeze over the top of the float.

Although it was but 9 o'clock when our launch steamed up to the landing, the crews were hard at work, as they had been for two hours.

Besides the "Varsity" there are the junior and freshman crews from the University of "Pennsy," both of which will partake in races of their class before the Poughkeepsie racing season is closed.

Ellis Ward, coach of the "Varsity" crew, met me at the landing.

He extended a hand that has grown hard in the service.

"You are welcome," he said, cordially, "if you will act as one of us for the day, so the boys may not feel, by comparison with your freedom, the limitations imposed by their present life in training."

I promised to eat no more and work no less than the other members of the crew that day, and therewith I was lifted out of the launch to the float landing.

From that time on—the time of the cap with the big P and the long peak—I was one of them.

It was a delightful experience, being one of them.

I wished I might have been one of them in real earnest, with great, big, ugly muscles that rise and fall at every movement. I knew I should move about a great deal, and in ways to show the biceps to the best advantage, just as they did.



"The parti-colored oars, with their blue and red edges, flashed like eels in the sunlight, then flashed again and again, their beautiful, rhythmic motion keeping time with the swaying of eight well developed backs. And with those easy, graceful strokes that scarcely suggested an effort they glided swiftly up the river almost before we realized that they were off."



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH MADE AT POUGHKEEPSIE BY THE SUNDAY JOURNAL'S SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

their "pets," as they term them, are safe from the rising tide. And no wonder that a few nights ago, when they saw from their windows how the tide was rising in the storm, they stole down to the float, waded in the boathouse through two feet of water and carried the shells to a spot that was high and dry, on land.

"Starboard, ready!" cried Captain Boyle.

Four brawny legs flashed as one in the sunlight and fastened themselves in the foot pads provided in the centre of the shell.

"Starboard in!"

Four similar legs joined their mates and the starboard oars were seated.

The port oars followed by similar orders. The half gaiters in the shell were heeled to fit the feet thrust in them, seats were worked back and forth to make sure they moved easily. Coach Ward hammered away at an oarlock that had been wrenched out of shape. Coxswain Lee pulled the rudder in place and adjusted his glasses, preps story to looking stern, and then cried loudly: "Attention, crew! Push away!"

"All ready, now!"

The parti-colored oars, with their light, then flashed again and again, with the swaying of eight well-developed strokes that scarcely suggested an effort, for we realized that they were on.

The freshman crew followed in a pair, provided with an enormous megaphone.

"As soon as they have finished a practice row, you shall have the coxswain's place do."

"Must a coxswain coax?"

"Well, yes, he does a little bit of coaxing to be a man with a good deal of boys to their best work. In an Ward raised the megaphone